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Pres. Bush may address RP Congress during visit

MANILA, Phils. — United States President George W. Bush may address a joint session of Congress when he visits the Philippines next month for talks with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, a government spokesman said.

Bush is scheduled to make an eight-hour stopover here on Oct. 18 in what is largely seen as a gesture of thanks to Arroyo for her staunch support in the U.S.-led "war on terror."

"The two Presidents are going to talk between themselves, and, of course, the other aspect of it is the address in Congress," said Victoriano Lecaros, Manila's spokesman for the Bush visit. "I don't have 100 percent certainty on that (address), but certainly that is a prominent feature of the visit."

An advance team of 36 White House and State Department officials is now in Manila to check on preparations for the Bush

Continued on page 17





Concert of Philippine dances and music

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — Michelle Camaya, right, top photo, dancer for the American musicals "Fame," "Swing" and "Lion King" dances a Philippine native dance during the recently concluded 2003 Concert of Philippine Dances and Music presented by the Samahan Filipino American Performing Arts and Education Center at the Joan B. Croc Theatre in East San Diego. Bottom photo shows the dancers just after doing the the best known Philippine dance, "The Tinikling," which imitates the movements of the bird "tikling." Executive director is Dr. Lolita Carter, Ph.D.; Ruby Chiong is the artistic director and Ms. Camaya is contributing choreographer. Elly Aguilar is in charge of sponsors. (Filipino Press photos by E. Flores, Jr.)

'Truth' on firing of Fil-American Otay water official comes out at trial

By MASON BUCHANAN INOCENTES
Special to The Filipino Press

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — On April 18, 2001 the Otay Water District was thrown into turmoil when the board, lead by Tony Inocentes, removed millionaire businessman and radio station owner Jaime Bonilla as board president.

In other actions that day the General Manager, Special Counsel Bonaficio Garcia, and the Law Firm of Burke, Williams and Sorenson were all fired. Resignations from five former business associates and employees of Bonilla's business empire, that had landed high level jobs at the district, followed the next day.

Scooping even the Union Tribune, The Filipino Press was the first to report in detail the

Continued on page 22

Inzunza to keynote Filipino Village confab

NATIONAL CITY, Calif. - Affirming the significance of the community forum on the proposed Filipino Village, Mayor Nick Inzunza will deliver the keynote speech at the forum Oct. 11 at 9 a.m. at the Martin Luther King Community Center in National City.

The creation of the Filipino Village in National City is one of Mayor Inzunza's major goals during his administration. He recognizes the contributions of the Filipino American community to the diversity and vibrancy of the city. A casual tour of Plaza Boulevard and 8th Street will show many Filipino-owned businesses, including restaurants, novelty stores, beauty parlors, money remittance centers and dental clinics.



Mayor Nick Inzunza

Filipinos account for 17 percent of the total population of National City according to Census 2000.

"We look at the planned Filipino Village as a welcome development," says Willie Racelis, president of the Filipino Ameri-

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Cardinal Jaime L. Sin

Cardinal Sin retires from Manila pulpit of power

By JOHN O'CALLAGHAN

MANILA, Phils. — Cardinal Jaime Sin, an outspoken cleric who has helped topple notorious Philippine leaders but alienated some of the faithful with frequent forays into politics, is retiring at 75 with the Vatican's blessing.

Sin's departure was expected after his birthday on August 31 but there had been speculation Pope John Paul would ask him to stay on as Archbishop of Manila and the most influential churchman in a nation of 65 million Roman Catholics.

"As I enter a new chapter in my twilight years, I can say with gratitude that I have given my very best to God and country," Sin said in a statement.

The Vatican said the Pope granted Sin's request to retire because of his old age. He will be replaced by Gaudencio Rosales, now the Archbishop of Lipa, south of Manila.

Sin played a pivotal role in ousting late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986 when his radio broadcasts sparked a million-

Continued on page 18

Filipino films, focus at S.D. Asian Film Festival

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — The San Diego Asian Film Festival, presented by Qualcomm, has come a long way in the last four years, gaining international recognition, praise and respect.

This year, the competitive festival will premiere more than 130 films, including shorts, documentaries and features, all of which were made by or are about persons of Asian descent.

Workshops, panels, and receptions are also on the schedule for the four-day festival that runs from Oct. 2 to 5 at the Madstone Hazard Center theaters. Some films will also show at the University of San Diego's Institute for Peace and Justice.

A handful of films with Filipino related content are on the playlist this year. Those films include Small Voices , An Untold Triumph, and a Filipino short films program. In addition, Filipino actress and San Diego native Joy Bisco is scheduled to attend.

"With a strong selection of Filipino and Filipino-American films in this years program, we anticipate San Diego's large Filipino community to support and attend the festival once again," says George Lin, Associate Film Festival Director.

Film Descriptions (Show times in parentheses):

Small Voices: A story of a young woman who begins work

Continued on page 18

Absentee law disqualifies 1-M potential Fil-Am voters

MANILA, Phils. — About a million of potential overseas Filipino voters are disqualified by an Absentee Voting Law provision that won't allow immigrants and permanent residents to register to vote unless they declare intent to return to the country.

Apprehensions over this condition was the biggest setback for the low turnout of Filipino

Continued on page 18

Registered to vote?
myVOTE COUNTS
www.myvotecounts.org

Filipina hit, killed by car while waiting at bus stop

IMPERIAL BEACH, Calif. — A 52-year-old Filipina of Imperial Beach was run over and killed Sunday by an alleged underaged drunk driver not licensed to drive, police and court officials have said.

Almost every morning for years, hotel housekeeper Julieta Toledo waits in the same bus stop with her husband, Edgardo, to go to work.

The dawn of Sept. 14 was different.

As the mother sat inside her usual enclosed bus shelter

Continued on page 20

Education campaign targets ethnic minority voters

SAN DIEGO, Calif. —With California's October 7th Special Statewide Election fast approaching, California Secretary of State Kevin Shelley has launched an aggressive outreach and education program to get key election information out to voters.

With less than 25 days to the election, fewer polling places, a two-part recall ballot with 135 replacement candidates and two ballot propositions, Shelley believes educating all of California's voters is more important

Continued on page 10



MANILA, Philippines — Student activists gesture with their red-painted hands to stop alleged US dictates over the World Trade Organization (WTO) in a rally near the US Embassy in Manila. Talks of the 5th WTO Ministerial Meeting in Cancun, Mexico collapsed and the organization's self-imposed deadline of January 2005 to reach an agreement that dismantles global trade barriers will likely fail following the walkout by delegates from Africa, Caribbean and Asia. (MNSwirephoto)

News from the Philippines

US lawyers want to pursue RP case vs. treasure hunter

MANILA, Phils. — American lawyers offered their services to the Philippine government to sue the treasure hunter who wants to sell antiques valued at about $50 million he took during 11 years of operations off the Philippine coasts.

The Department of Justice is expected to soon complete its report on the possible legal actions to be made by the Philippine government against the 55-year-old deep-sea adventurer, Phil Greco, before the United States courts.

The Philippine National Museum has revealed the treasure hunter did not have permits to explore or excavate, said Jose Jimeno, deputy consul general of the Philippine Consulate General in New York.

A number of American lawyers has offered their services to the Philippine justice department and government, according to an unnamed DOJ source.

Greco said he had undertaken deep-sea treasure diving operations in 16 sites in the last 11 years. He has recovered 23,500 pieces of porcelain, 4- to 5-foot-high jars, thousands of Ming dynasty plates with diameters of 10 to 25 inches, some weighing 100 pounds.

Citing legal issues, Guernsey's Auction House in New York indefinitely postponed a scheduled auction of thousands of Greco's artifacts valued at more than $50 million. That collection includes Dutch, Portuguese and English cannons, rare gold and silver coins, a 1784 Spanish bell, and black granite statues believed to have been buried in royal tombs dating back to the Ming Dynasty of 1368-1644.



MANILA, Philippines — President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo plays like a doting grandmother to twins Lea and Rachel, who were successfully separated in an operation in Taiwan last June 28. The former Siamese twin sisters were brought to Malacanang by their parents, Andy and Marietta Awel of Kalinga-Apayao, to thank the President for financial assistance for their trip to Taiwan. (OPS photo via MNS)

Grenade blast kills 1, injures 16 in market

MANILA (Reuters) - One person was killed and 16 wounded on Monday when a hand grenade exploded in a market in the southern Philippines city of Cotabato, police said.

Police said it was not immediately clear who planted the grenade, which went off when it was accidentally kicked by somebody shopping in the market.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the country's largest Muslim rebel group, is active in the area but has been observing a ceasefire as it inches closer to formal peace talks with the government.

A MILF spokesman said his group had nothing to do with the blast.

Hundreds of people have been killed in rebel attacks in the past but personal disputes resulting in violence are also common in an area flush with weapons.

Palace refuses to declare GMA candidacy

MANILA (Mabuhay) — Malacanang has junked the call of Sen. Rodolfo Biazon to declare President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's candidacy for the 2004 presidential elections.

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye said Arroyo does not want to be distracted by politics.

Bunye said although Biazon believes Arroyo's declaration of her candidacy will help bring stability, the President believes that peace and a stable economy will help the country.

Biazon prodded Arroyo to disclose her political plans to erase speculations that there will be no presidential elections next year.

"I think President Arroyo should categorically declare that she is running in the 2004 elections," said Biazon. (MNS)

1 of 4 Pinoys would leave RP for good - poll shows

MANILA, Phils. — Given the chance, nearly one in four Filipinos would leave the Philippines for good, an independent pollster said.

Pulse Asia Inc. Chief Felipe Miranda estimated the figures were probably a "world record." He suggested more and more Filipinos are increasingly losing hope of achieving a better life in their country where four in 10 live on less than a dollar a day.

He said the Manila-based polling outfit found in an August national survey that "if migration were possible," 22 percent would leave their Southeast Asian country now.

Twenty-one percent are undecided while 57 percent reject the migration option, Miranda said.

"What kind of political and religious leaders have Filipinos had across 400 years such that in August of 2003 enough of them — as many as 20 million souls — could wish they might leave this country for good and found a new community, perhaps even a new nation elsewhere?" he said.

Miranda said the poll found that the "better and more productive segments of the nation's population" wanted to pull up the stakes, that includes 40 percent of those living in Manila, 38 percent of the A, B and C upper and middle-economic classes, 37 percent of college-educated citizens, and 34 percent among the 18-24 age bracket.

Miranda did not disclose his sampling figures.

About seven million of the 80 million Filipinos already live abroad, most of them as temporary workers.

Unemployment rate in RP rises in July

MANILA (Mabuhay) — The jobless rate in the Philippines has risen to 12.7 per cent in July, the government said.

The figure was half a percentage point higher than the 12.2 per cent unemployment rate in April, and 1.5 percentage points above the year-earlier figure of 11.2 per cent, the National Statistics Office (NSO) said in a statement.

It gave no explanation.

About 34.8 per cent of the labor force is employed in agriculture, while 48.6 per cent are in the services sector. Industry accounted for 16.6 per cent. (MNS)

Rebel attacks, burns police station, kills 2

MANILA (Mabuhay) — Communist guerrillas have killed two policemen, stole cash and firearms and burned down a police station and a bus in separate attacks, the military said.

A New People's Army (NPA) band attacked the police station in Santa Lucia, Ilocos Sur shortly before midnight on Sept. 15, killing two officers and wounding two others, military spokesmen said.

The rebels set fire to the building and to a police vehicle before fleeing with an undetermined number of firearms from the police armory, they added.

At about the same time, NPA rebels robbed passengers of a bus and then set the vehicle on fire.

The guerrillas flagged down the bus near the town of Pantukan, divesting dozens of passengers of cash and other belongings before setting the vehicle alight, military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said.

The NPA was apparently trying to extort money from the bus owners, the military said. (MNS)

RP to conduct 'exploratory talks' with CPP in Norway

MANILA (Mabuhay) — The Philippine government is to hold "exploratory talks" with communist insurgents this month in Norway ahead of possibly resuming formal peace negotiations.

Chief peace negotiator Silvestre Bello III said the talks were likely to be held from Sept. 20 to 21 in Oslo, which has hosted previous peace talks between the sides.

Bello dismissed press reports that the exiled leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) had threatened to walk away from the peace table unless they were removed from a US and European list of foreign terrorist organizations.

"It is not a condition," Bello said of the insurgents' reported demand.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has suspended talks with the communists after their armed wing, the New People's Army (NPA), assassinated two politicians in 2001.

Arroyo bids Sin farewell, welcomes Rosales

MANILA, Phils. — President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lauded Jaime Cardinal Sin on his retirement as archbishop of Manila and welcomed his successor, Bishop Gaudencio Rosales of the Diocese of Lipa City in Batangas.

In a statement on the change of leadership in the local Catholic Church hierarchy, the President hailed Cardinal Sin as a "champion of Philippine democracy."

Arroyo said Cardinal Sin, who reached the retirement age of 75 years on Aug. 31, "brought the church squarely behind the fight for human freedom and strengthened its role in the transformation of government, nation and people."

"He may have retired but his leadership and guidance will live on," she said, adding she will always turn to him for "his wise and endearing counsel on doing what is right and just."

In welcoming 71-year-old Bishop Rosales, Arroyo expressed confidence that he "will carry the torch of the faith, as a catalyst for positive change and as an instrument of good governance, just as ably and valiantly as his predecessor."

Presidential spokesman Ignacio Bunye, meanwhile, said Cardinal Sin acted like "a true shepherd" of the flock and "a true leader of the people" at the critical juncture of the nation's history.

Bunye said the Arroyo administration's policy has always been to respect the church as an institution. "I believe that good relations between the church and the government will continue," he added.

President Arroyo orders PNP to step up crime fighting

MANILA, Phils. — President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered the Philippine National Police to step up the fight against crime and all threats to peace and security to realize her vision of a strong Republic.

"The police is very important in the building of a strong Republic," the President said in her speech at the flag-raising ceremony of the PNP at its headquarters in Camp Crame, Quezon City.

The President said that one can say that a strong Republic has been realized and maintained only if the people feel that they are safe in their homes and in the streets.

"We have so many crimes to deal with, crimes in the streets, crimes in the highways, and high-profile crimes that are bannered daily in the newspapers," the President said.

The President also thanked the officers and men of the PNP for their total support for her administration, which they have expressed in a manifesto read by PNP chief Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

She also congratulated the PNP for the success of its anti-drug campaign which has already netted leaders of international drug syndicates, thousands of pushers, and P8 billion worth of drugs seized after spending only about P30 million.

The President ordered the PNP to duplicate its success against drugs in other crimes like hijacking and bank holdups.

"We must now train our sights on linkages between the underworld and those holding political power. The people must be aware of this threat and our people must not glorify rogue leaders masquerading as paragons of reform or good performance," the President said.

The PNP is now doing its best to pin down the mastermind of recent crimes to see if there are any political and underworld linkages at work and gather evidence to avoid any witch hunting, the President said.

The President also directed the PNP chief to see to it that police officers do not frequent nightclubs and other entertainment sites as this smacks of protection and corruption, referring to the robbery in a Quezon City KTV that reportedly involved some police officers.

"The PNP must not only get to the bottom of this crime but discipline its ranks with regard to night life," she said.

U.S. handcuffs dealer to prove Lacson can pay her

MANILA, Phils. — A Filipino-American businesswoman who won a case against Sen. Panfilo Lacson in the United States is now in Manila to prove the senator could afford to pay the damages awarded to her by a U.S. court over an aborted contract seven years ago.

In a press conference, Blanquita Pelaez said she discovered Lacson had three mansions in Metro Manila, one in Ayala, Alabang in Muntinlupa City, a second in BF Homes, Paranaque City and another in Las Pinas City.

"So far, I found out he has three mansions. I will present it to the court and it is up to them to decide and Lacson to explain," Pelaez told a press briefing, adding that evidence of the three mansions was given to her by a friend.

Pelaez, a U.S. citizen who lives in California's Alameda county, owns B.H.Pelaez Enterprises which is the exclusive agent of Smith & Wesson in the Philippines.

Last month, a California court reaffirmed its earlier decision to award a default judgment to Pelaez, who sued Lacson for canceling a P15.6 million handcuffs contract in 1996 when he was still chief of the Philippine National Police.

IFC may invest $125-M in RP

MANILA (Mabuhay) — The International Finance Corp. (IFC), the World Bank's private sector arm, plans to invest as much as $125 million in various Philippine projects next year, country director Vipul Bhagat said.

He said the amount is 87 per cent higher than this year's investment commitment.

Investments would likely be made in the areas of information technology, banking and energy, Bhagat told a news conference.



MANILA, Philippines — Filipino-American businesswoman Blanquita Pelaez shows to media photos of houses allegedly belonging to Sen. Panfilo Lacson but were not declared in his statement of assets and Liabilities (SAL). Pelaez, who won a $3 million suit against Lacson in a California court for non-payment of handcuffs he ordered for the Philippine National Police (PNP), plans to file a writ of attachment on Lacson's properties. (MNSwirephotos)

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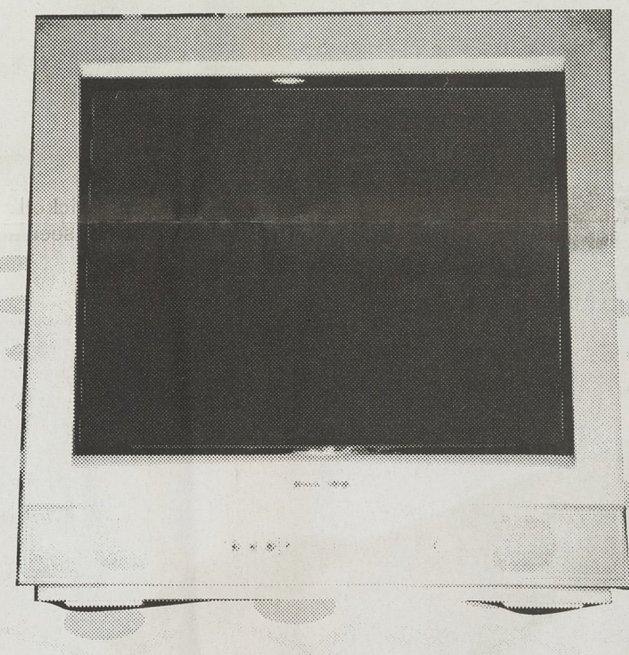


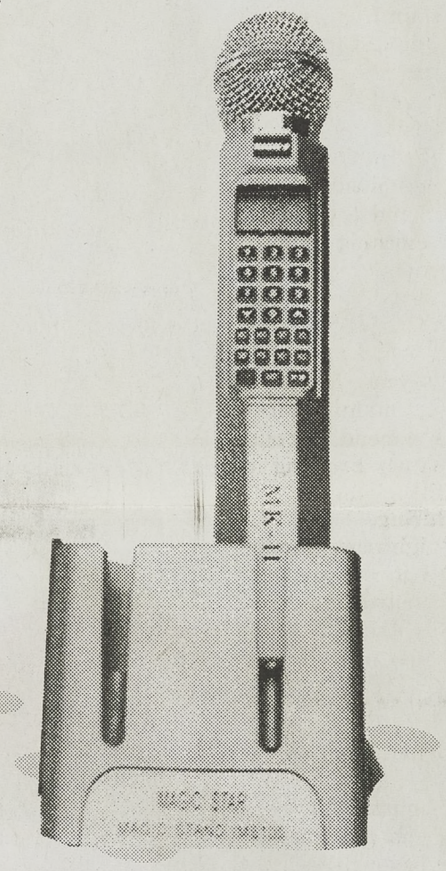
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Street Talk

Continued from Page 7

nent residence in the Philippines."

This condition, added on to the requirement to personally report to a consular office to register (subsequently amended) and then to cast a ballot, has been such a damper for green card holders that very few have bothered to avail of their restricted rights.

One reason is that green card holders who are away from the US for over six months or are determined to have taken permanent residence outside of the US, could lose their immigrant status.

But this does not apply to US citizens. In their case, they can reside outside of America for as long as they want without losing their citizenship.

At any rate, at this point, NaFFAA has also been pointing out to green card holders that a "residence" is different from a "domicile," the former being what former Congressman Mark Jimenez claimed in order to qualify him as a candidate to run in the 6th district of Manila, and the latter being where he regularly laid himself down to sleep (somewhere in Makati, I believe).

But it takes a great effort to get the word out. And by the time people understand their options, the deadline for registration will have passed. Shame.

A lot has been said about the beneficial effects of dual citizenship on the Philippines. Those who have reacquired Philippine citizenship want to prove those fond hopes true.

One of the benefits they would have wanted to bring to the country is that of an intelligent vote, untainted by guns and gold. Unfortunately, the framers of the absentee voting law have made sure that this noble intention will be effectively foiled. At least, for next year's elections.

But the flood gates have now been opened. As more and more overseas Filipinos become involved in the Philippine political process, we may begin to see a change in the way elections are conducted in our hapless country. And much of that change will be brought about by former Filipino citizens who have decided that they can no longer turn their backs on their long-suffering Motherland.

(greg maca-ben ta@hotmail .com)

Filipino Potpourri

Continued from Page 7

havior based on consideration and kindness, and manners are the outward evidence that we live by that code. While manners and each individual "demeanor" must be constantly redefined

and revised, etiquette is as valid today as it was yesterday.

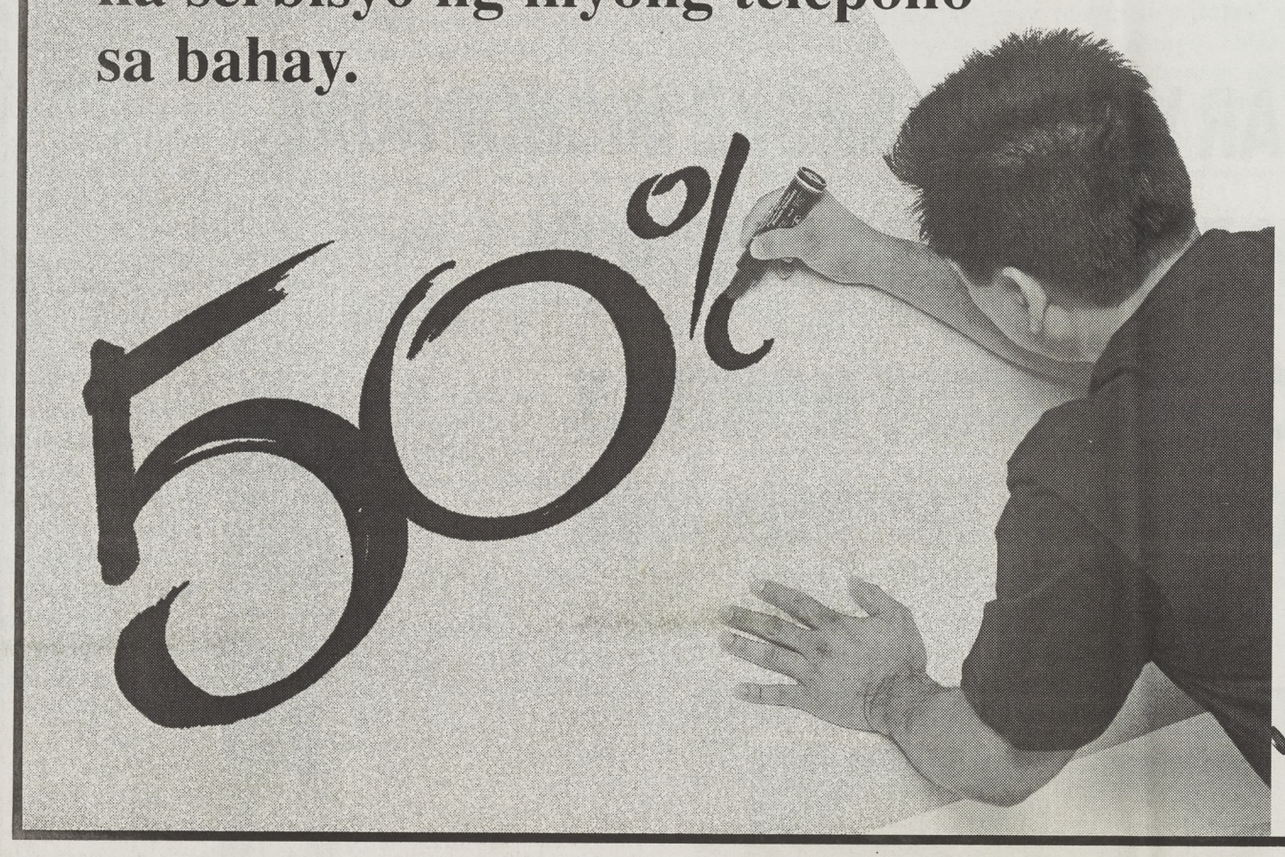
Emily Post gave the meaning to etiquette when she wrote: "Beneath its myriad rules, the fundamental purpose of etiquette is to make the world a pleasanter place to live in, and you a more pleasant person to live with."

There is really no need to redefine that. The way of life of those who accept the code has not changed over many centuries.

And... in my own humble opinion - I hope, never will.

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